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WEST GERMANY: Brandt is taken aback by the hard Soviet position on Berlin. (Page 4)

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WEST GERMANY: Chancellor Brandt is considerably taken aback by the hard Soviet position on Berlin revealed in Wednesday's meeting of the ambassadors' advisers.

Brandt and his aides have been anxious to see rapid progress in the four-power negotiations on Berlin, and they were encouraged by the relatively limited demands informally put forward by Ambassador Abrasimov last week. Brandt, however, has now told the US ambassador that Wednesday's Soviet proposal for having two agreements, with details of the second one to be secret, is "out of the question." He is not attracted by the idea that the Allies should reach a general agreement quickly to justify ratification of the Soviet - West German treaty, leaving a detailed Berlin settlement to be worked out later. With regard to Soviet demands that Bundestag committee meetings be among the West German activities banned in West Berlin, Brandt urges that the Western Allies refuse to give an inch.

Brandt would naturally be most reluctant to see the four powers fail to reach a Berlin settlement, as that would thwart his whole policy of seeking detente with the East. Hence he may not remain adamant on particular specifics such as Bundestag committee meetings.

Brandt believes, however, that the whole list of Soviet demands would give the Soviets and East Germans dangerous influence in West Berlin. He doubtless sees that a two-phase approach would provide almost no leverage for gaining concessions in the second phase. He is also wary of Soviet efforts to play the Allies and West Germans against each other.

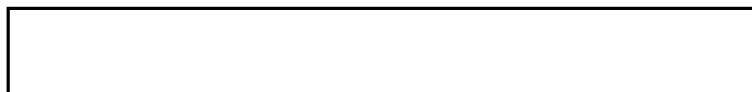


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